

- Visitor entries down 4.3% in 2011
- Retail sales slip 1.4% in December; up 2.3% for 2011
- Farm cash receipts climb 4.0% in 2011

The Economy

- After four straight monthly increases, retail sales in BC fell 1.4% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December. Retail sales gains were seen in half the provinces, most markedly in Nova Scotia (+2.4%) and PEI (+1.4%), while Saskatchewan (-3.5%) saw the most significant decline. Weak sales in the automotive sector (-1.0%) and gasoline stations (-1.1%) were major factors in the overall slip in retail sales at the national level (-0.2%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- Wholesalers in British Columbia saw sales inch 0.5% (*seasonally adjusted*) lower in December. Canadian wholesale activity was up (+0.9%), its seventh gain of the last eight months. Six provinces saw higher wholesale sales in December, primarily those in the East. With the exception of a notable jump in Manitoba (+3.7%), sales were down in the West, with Saskatchewan (-3.3%) posting the largest decline.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- Although investment in new housing construction in B.C. fell (-9.5%) in December, it was still 8.7% higher than in the same month in 2010 (*measured in 2002 constant prices*). Investment in the construction of single family dwellings (-2.4%) and duplexes (-10.1%) was down compared to the last month of 2010, but the declines were offset by a large increase in apartment (+37.1%) construction and a moderate climb in row housing (+3.9%) investment.

Nationally, December construction investment was 10.2% higher than it was at the end of 2010, with increased activity seen in all types of dwellings.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- Visitor entries to Canada through BC were up (+0.2%, *seasonally adjusted*) for the second straight month in December. Same-day visits from the US (+0.0%) were unchanged, while overnight trips declined (-0.6%). Overall, total US entries dipped 0.4%. However, there were notably more travellers from overseas countries (+2.0%), driven primarily by a 4.5% increase in the number of visitors from Asia. Meanwhile, European entries were also up, albeit to a lesser degree (+0.3%).

There were over 1.2 million Canadians returning home via BC in December, up 2.4% from the previous month. Total trips from the US increased 2.4%, while the number of Canadians returning from overseas also jumped (+2.3%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada

2011 in Review

- Retail sales in the province climbed 2.3% in 2011, following a strong year in 2010, when sales strengthened 5.3%. Convenience stores (+10.8%) saw a double-digit jump for the year, while many others, such as clothing stores (+6.0%), new car dealers (+8.2%) and gasoline stations (+8.6%), also saw sales increase substantially. Not all types of retailers fared well in 2011; overall sales at food & beverage (-0.6%), electronics & appliance (-2.3%) and furniture & home furnishings (-2.8%) stores were down from 2010 levels.

Nationally, annual retail sales climbed 3.6% with activity increasing in all provinces. Saskatchewan (+8.5%) registered the most notable gain.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

Did you know...

An estimated 62% of British Columbian adults have a smart phone, the highest rate in the country (54% nationally). *Source: Ipsos Canada*

- **Wholesale sales in British Columbia rose 5.0% in 2011, building on a similar boost in the previous year (+4.7%).** Strong sales by motor vehicle & parts (+8.9%) and building material (+11.0%) wholesalers stood out. These, coupled with increases in several other industries, more than offset weaker returns by sellers of personal & household goods (-1.3%). Canadian wholesale sales jumped 7.4%, with Saskatchewan (+21.8%) and Alberta (+14.7%) recording the most substantial growth during the year.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Farm cash receipts in BC were up 4.0% in 2011, marking the fifth consecutive year of increases.** Livestock sales climbed (+8.5%) and revenue from crops was also higher (+1.1%). At the same time, subsidies and other payments to farmers were far lower (-19.5%) than in 2010.

BC cattle producers (-10.4%) recorded double-digit declines last year, but farmers of calves (+35.6%), lambs (+65.8%), hens & chickens (+15.5%) and turkeys (+6.5%) received substantially more from sales. Meanwhile, producers of wheat, oats, barley and canola accounted for much of the increase in crop receipts.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **International entries arriving in Canada via British Columbia were down 4.3% in 2011.** This decline was in line with an overall downward trend in the number of non-resident travellers recorded since 2001.

Entries from the US fell (-4.7%), with overnight (-2.1%) and same-day (-9.8%) travel from the US dropping at notable rates. The number of overseas travellers slipped 3.3%, with a particularly strong decrease in the number of travellers from Europe (-10.1%). *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

Voting Patterns

- **Approximately 14.8 million of the 24.3 million Canadian citizens on the electoral list cast a ballot in the May 2011 federal election, making for a national turnout rate of 61%. PEI (73%), New Brunswick (66%), Saskatche-**

wan (63%) and Quebec (63%) were among those provinces with higher-than-average voting rates, while those with lower rates included Newfoundland & Labrador (53%), Alberta (56%) and Manitoba (59%). BC's turnout rate was close to the national average.

Canadian voting rates appear to increase with both age and education. However, the difference in voter turnout and education levels is much stronger among young voters. After controlling for age and education, among those less likely to vote are: single parents with children under the age of five (36% compared with 60% of couples with children the same age); immigrant citizens; and the unemployed. Renters also had significantly lower voting rates than home owners. *Data Source: S.C. Cat.# 75-001-X*

Agriculture

- **The national cattle herd grew for the first time in seven years in 2011.** As of January 1st, 2012, the number of cattle on Canadian farms was estimated at 12.5 million, up 58,000 head (+0.5%) from a year earlier. The size of BC's herd jumped (+3.8%) from 520,000 to 540,000 during this period. Alberta (5.0 million), Saskatchewan (2.6 million) and Ontario (1.7 million) are the provinces with the biggest cattle herds.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

The Nation

- **Canadian corporations earned higher profits in the fourth quarter of 2011 (+9.0% to \$71.4 billion) than in the previous quarter, with widespread increases across most industries.** Boasting a rise of 169.0%, manufacturers of motor vehicles and parts accounted for a significant proportion of the overall profit gain in non-financial industries. Profits were also up in the financial sector, with insurance carriers registering a hefty increase in the fourth quarter.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

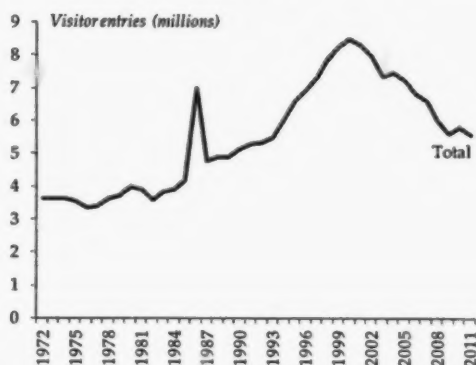
*Infoline Issue: 12-08
February 24th, 2012*

Visitor entries in 2011: A year in review

Visitor entries to B.C. fall 4.3% in 2011

After a brief respite in 2010, the number of entries to Canada via British Columbia was down 4.3% in 2011, continuing on a downward trend that began in 2001. Since 2001, the volume of travellers to the province has shrunk by roughly one-third (-33.2%).

Total entries to B.C. have been in rapid decline since 2001



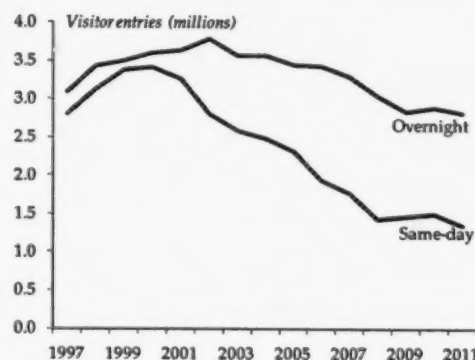
Data Source: Statistics Canada

U.S. entries continue to slump in 2011

Compared to the previous year, entries from the U.S. were down 4.7% in 2011, as a result of a decline in the number of same-day (-9.8%) and overnight (-2.1%) travellers arriving in B.C.

In general, U.S. entries to Canada via B.C. have been declining since 2001. This is due to a variety of factors including economic downturns, health & security concerns, as well as an appreciation of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. greenback.

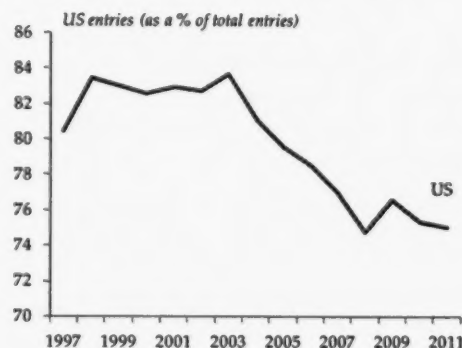
For over a decade, same-day and overnight entries from the U.S. have been in decline



Data Source: Statistics Canada

Despite the decline in absolute terms, the U.S. still represents the largest share of total entries to B.C. In 2011, travellers from the U.S. accounted for three-quarters (75%) of total non-resident travel to the province.

The share of entries coming from the U.S. has fallen sharply since the early 2000s



Data Source: Statistics Canada

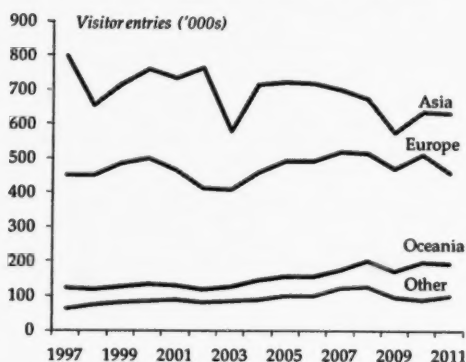
However, that proportion has slipped from the roughly 83% share that would arrive an-

nually from the United States during the early part of the last decade.

European travel to B.C. falls sharply, pushing non-U.S. entries lower in 2011

Total non-U.S. entries to Canada via British Columbia were down 3.3% in 2011. While the number of travellers from Asia (-0.4%) and Oceania (-1.0%) was down slightly compared to 2010, the largest impact on non-U.S. entries came from a substantial drop in entries from Europe (-10.1%).

In 2011, much of the slowdown in non-U.S. entries was due to fewer European visits



Data Source: Statistics Canada

The slowdown in volume of travel from Europe in 2011 was widespread, with fewer entries from the Netherlands (-11.6%), France (-7.2%), Germany (-5.8%), and the United Kingdom (-5.7%).

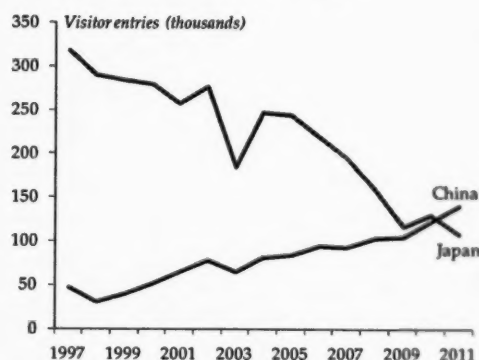
Visits from Asia slipped 0.4% in 2011. However, this was largely the result of a double-digit drop in travel from Japan (-17.5%) and South Korea (-11.6%). Entries from China¹, on the other hand, were up significantly (+14.1%), building on a substantial increase (+17.5%) a year earlier. For the first time,

¹ Data for China excludes Hong Kong

China surpassed Japan as a leading source of visitors from Asia.

Historically, Japan had been B.C.'s largest source of visitor entries from Asia. However, since 1996, total entries from Japan have been on a general downward trend, falling from a peak of just over 342,000 in 1996 to just under 107,000 by 2011, a decline of more than two-thirds (-68.7%) over that period.

In 2011, total visitor entries from China surpassed those from Japan



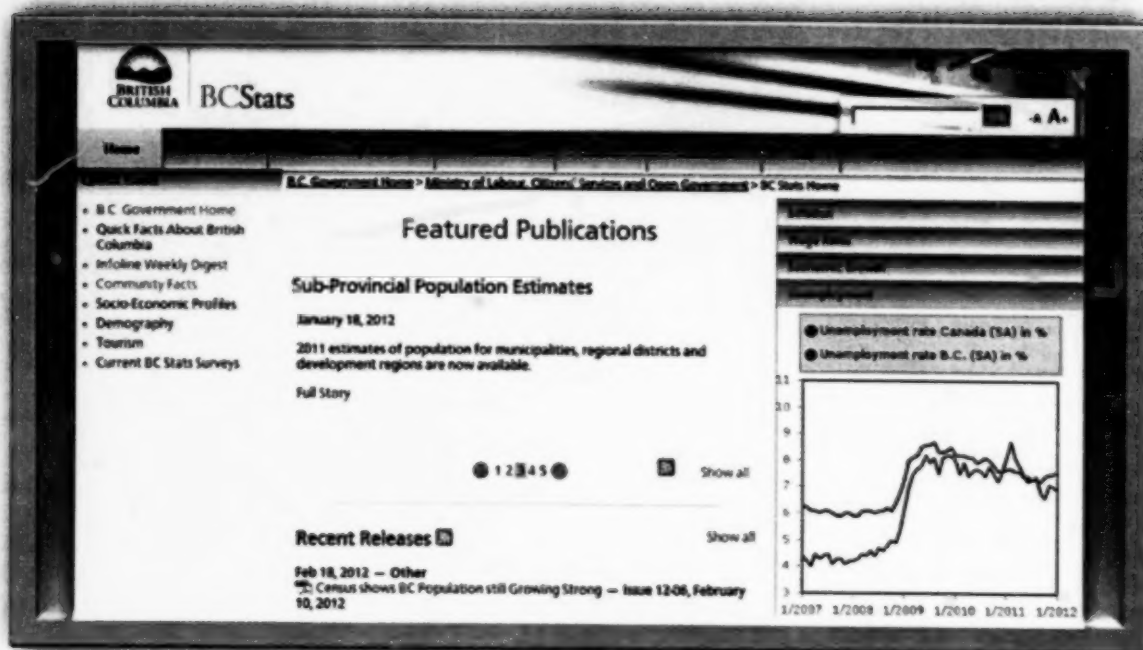
Data Source: Statistics Canada

The number of entries from China, on the other hand, has risen dramatically (+468.4%) from just 25,000 in 1996 to 139,000 by 2011, making China the largest source of non-resident entries from Asia to B.C.

Conclusion

Visitor entries to Canada via British Columbia resumed its prolonged downward trend in 2011. Travel from the U.S. (both same-day and overnight) continued to slow in 2011.

Meanwhile a decline in non-U.S. entries was largely driven by double-digit slowdowns in the volume of travel from Europe, Japan, and South Korea.



BC Stats launches new website

BC Stats is pleased to announce the launch of a new, high performance version of its website: www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca. The February 20th site launch, which represents the culmination of more than a 14 months' worth of work from nearly all of the 55 staff members at BC Stats, is the most comprehensive version of BC Stats on the web to-date.

The new Internet presence for BC Stats offers many improvements for visitors, many of which are based on user feedback from all levels of government and the public. Features such as improved search simply mean information is more accessible. This translates into statistics that become easier to find and utilize in every day work or research for British Columbians.

"The project was initially motivated by a desire to better serve our clients and citizens, and it was guided by the aspects of the *Citizens @ The Centre: BC Government 2.0* strategy and was influenced by learning from the Citizen Engagement process undertaken by our ministry.

From the outside, numerous improvements will be readily apparent to users – we consulted with users

and we acted, and going forward, our mantra will be 'continuous improvement'. From the inside, the website enhancement project was the first, and most significant, lean management activity tackled at BC Stats; 'Under the hood', the new site is more reliable, more efficient and easier to manage.

The website enhancement project was an internal, branch-wide effort and I'm extremely proud of what we've accomplished."

- Angelo Cocco, Provincial Statistician and BC Stats Executive Director

These improvements will immediately be noticeable: A completely new and modern design, improved and more intuitive navigation, clear information on the services that are available through BC Stats, an innovative employee research portal, filterable search, social media integration including Twitter (@BCStats), a brand new BC Stats blog, and much more. Powered by a new content management system, staff within the organization will be able to release publications and data even faster for end users, which will be accessible through the website and newly created RSS feeds, based on popular categories of information. Visit the new site at www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca.



Email transmission information service from BC Stats



also on the Internet at www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca or choose **RSS**

BC at a glance...

POPULATION (thousands)		
	Oct 1/2011	% change on one year ago
BC	4,592.0	0.9
Canada	34,605.3	1.0
GDP and INCOME (Released Nov 8)		
(BC - at market prices)	2010	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$ millions)	203,147	5.9
GDP (\$ 2002 millions)	167,140	3.0
GDP (\$ 2002 per Capita) (reflects revised pop)	36,899	1.4
Personal Disposable Income (\$ 2002 per Capita)	26,166	2.2
TRADE (\$ millions, seasonally adjusted)		
		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Dec 2011	3,104	-1.9
Merchandise Exports - Dec 2011	2,771	-3.6
Retail Sales - Dec 2011	5,028	-1.4
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		
(all items - Jan 2012)	% change on one year ago	12-month avg % change
BC	1.7	2.3
Vancouver	1.8	2.2
Victoria	1.5	2.1
Canada	2.5	2.9
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		
(seasonally adjusted)	Jan 2012	% change on prev. month
Jobs Created (-Lost) - BC	-2.2	
Labour Force - BC	2,462.1	-0.1
Employed - BC	2,291.7	-0.1
Unemployed - BC	170.4	-0.7
		Dec 2011
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	6.9	7.0
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	7.6	7.5
INTEREST RATES (percent)		
	Feb 12/2012	Feb 23/2011
Prime Business Rate	3.00	3.00
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	3.20	3.50
- 5 year	5.24	5.44
US-CANADA EXCHANGE RATE		
	Feb 12/2012	Feb 23/2011
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn \$ per US \$	1.0000	0.9858
(closing rate) US \$ per Cdn \$	1.0004	1.0115
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jan 2012	% change on one year ago
BC	851.91	2.8
Canada	855.15	2.4

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada
 Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics
 For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

Census 2011 Fast Facts

According to the 2011 census, compared to other provinces, BC's population growth was second only to Alberta over the 2006 to 2011 period. In May of 2011, the census counted 4,400,057 persons in BC, up 286,570 (+7.0%) from the 2006 count. Read more on the 2011 Census page:

<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Census/2011Census.aspx>

The 2011 Census Counts are here

Find out how your community has changed. Today, Statistics Canada released the population and dwelling counts from the 2011 Census. These data cover Canada, the provinces and territories as well as smaller regions within BC such as cities, towns, villages and municipalities. See more on the 2011 Census page.

<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Census/2011Census.aspx>

Open Data

Statistics Canada implemented a new dissemination model. As of February 1, 2012, the CANSIM database is free to access and standard Census products are free. In addition, Statistics Canada no longer charges fees for the right to redistribute its information. Organizations are encouraged to redistribute information under terms and conditions similar to the Government of Canada Open Data Licence Agreement for Unrestricted Use of Canada's Data. The objective of the new dissemination model is to provide users with maximum benefit from statistical information about Canada's economy and society.

Released this week by BC Stats

- New Website - www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

Next week

- BC Business Indicators
- Tourism Sector Monitor
- Quarterly Regional Statistics